59.23 lakh rural women have opened their accounts.

(b) and (c) No, Sir.

(d) Question does not arise.

Diamond mining contract

587. SHRI B. K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether a diamond mining contract is being considered between Madhya Pradesh Government and the MNC conglomerate De Beers for prospecting of diamonds in Raipur area.

(b) whether any Memorandum of Understanding has been signed in this regard and if so, whether Hindustan Diamond Corporation (subsidiary of De Beers in India) is one of the signatories;

(c) whether Government are aware that De Beer were asked to pack off by the Angolan Government after the former had not exploited the contracted area for more than 10 years to block diamond production and thus to control the trade; and

(d) whether it is a fact that Minerals and Metals Trading Corporation of India jointly with National Mineral Development Corporarion (NMDC) is scouting for contracts abroad for diamond mining especially in Vietnam, Myanmar and Cambodia and if so, why in the first place MNC like De Beers are being entertained in preference to indigenous technology and capabilities for exploiting our own diamond resources?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF MINES (SHRI BALRAM SINGH YADAV): (a) Government have received a proposal from the Government of Madhya Pradesh for grant of a prospecting licence in favour of M/s. De Beers.

(b) and (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

(d) Diamond mining possibilities in Vietnam, Myanmar and Cambodia are yet to be proven. However, proven deposits of coloured stones, particularly rubies, do exist. Minerals and Metals Trading Corporation (MMTC) and National Mineral Development Corporation (NMDC) have made proposals to Vietnam but these are all in the preliminary stages of discussion. However, the proposal of Government of Madhya Pradesh is a sequeel to global tenders for prospectting licence and the proposal of the State Government is based on techno-economic evaluation of the responses received by them.

अपरिष्कृत और तैयार उत्पादों पर अलग अलग आयात शुल्क

588. **श्री अजीत जोगी** : क्या खान मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) क्या अपरिष्कृत तांबे, सेमिस तथा तैयार मालक के लिए अलग-अलग आयात शुल्क संबंधी कोई प्रस्ताव है ;

(ख) क्या इस संबंध में अन्तिम निर्णय लेने में असाधारण विलम्ब हुआ है ;

(ग) यदि हां, तो इसके क्या कारण हैं ;

(घ) निर्णय लेने में विलम्ब का तांबे सेमिस और संबंध एक्कों पर क्या प्रभाव पड़ा है ;

(ङ) क्या तांबे सेमिस तथा तैयार उत्पादों के आयात से कर्मकारों की छंटनी होगी ; और

(च) यदि हां, तो सरकार कर्मकारों के हितों की सुरक्षा के लिए क्या कदम उठाने का विचार रखती है ?

खान मंत्रालय के राज्य मंत्री (श्री बलराम सिंह यादव): (क) आगामी बजट को ध्यान में रखते हुए इस स्तर पर इस मामले में सरकार के विचार जाहिर करना संभव नहीं है।

(ख) जी, नहीं।

(ग) से (च) प्रश्न नहीं उठता।